

The Laughing Bear

by *Robert B.H. Bell*



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The Laughing Bear



The Laughing Bear

And Other Stories

By

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DEDICATION.

To the children of St. Mark's Church, Seattle, whose interest in these stories, told many years ago, was the inspiration that brought them to life. May they prove to other children the same joy. And so to them this book is lovingly dedicated by

The Author.

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The Laughing Bear

THE LAUGHING BEAR—
or
MOUWOU THE DELIVERER.



LONG time ago at Seoul, the capital of Korea (now under the control of Japan), lived a king and queen who had a little daughter called Chonwa.

The little princess grew in the sunshine of her parents' love, until she reached the age of eight. Then it was announced that, according to the custom of her country, her betrothal was to be arranged by the state. The mother led her into the beautiful garden and tried to show the perplexed girl why the rules of the court required that a king's child should be married for the sake of the country.

So fixed were their minds on this subject, that neither of them noticed a dark, fierce-looking man creeping after them. None but a very bold man would have dared come thus into the king's private grounds. He followed with fierce glances every movement of the innocent pair. When the queen and her child sat down on a bench to watch a turtle-

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dove drink at the fountain, the man crawled toward them with a long knife in his teeth. He was almost upon them, when the queen happened to see him. Before she could even cry for help, the ruffian stabbed her twice.

Courageously, the little princess sprang upon the man and scratched his face. He drew back from the unexpected attack, then rushed at the defiant little maiden, seized her by the waist, and carried her off in his arms.

Just as he reached the gate, he was stopped by an encounter that he little expected—he found himself face to face with an ugly, grinning bear.

The man placed his frightened burden on the ground, then reached for his bloody knife, and sprang at the huge bear. The bear sat up, still grinning. When the man came near enough, she struck him such a blow on the head that he went sprawling to the ground, and the knife flew out of his hand.

The man lay where he had fallen, with his ashen face turned toward the setting sun. Bruin waddled over to him and pushed him with her nose to see if he would move. He showed no sign of life. Then the bear turned and tried to pull the princess by the sleeve toward the palace. Chonwa

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was not at all afraid of her rescuer and followed her willingly.

They had not gone far when they were met by the king's guards, who came rushing toward them in frantic haste. The child hesitated between them and her rescuer, but when the captain laid hold of her, the bear turned and trotted away.

Chonwa told her father and his court of the attack and the rescue, but only the guard believed the bear part of the tale; and when, after a long hunt, no trace of bear or robber was found, the king dropped the whole affair.

The queen mother had a long illness, from which her recovery was hastened by the sight of her darling daughter, whom she had given up as lost.

The princess never forgot her shaggy deliverer, but looked daily for her return. Time passed rapidly at the court, and it did not seem long till four years had rolled away. By this time, according to the custom of her nation, Chonwa, though only twelve years old, was considered ready for marriage.

She was taken into the inner palace and clothed like a woman. A hateful "chan-ot" or veil was put over her face so that boys could not see her.

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Her only playmate was a harsh old governess who scolded her all the time, so that poor Chonwa often wished herself dead.

Among her former boy friends was a young prince, whom Chonwa considered her best playmate. One day she stole from the palace, unseen by her governess, and met this boy-prince whose name was Mousan. They were found out, and two days later the young prince was banished and Chonwa was betrothed to a sixty year old prince, whom she had never seen. Her protests were all in vain, for it was considered an honorable marriage arranged by the state for the benefit of the people of Korea. Imagine Chonwa's misery when she beheld her bethrothed. His name was Ham-kieng, which made one think of "dead pig." He looked like a pig, too, and snored loudly even in the daytime, when he was not being amused. When he walked he waddled like a very fat porker. Chonwa cried for days, but she could not stop the marriage arrangements, and at last the wedding day arrived.

The palace was beautifully decorated, and the guests were all assembled. Just as the king gave the command for the ceremony to begin, a loud growl was heard coming from the entrance. The

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priest stopped his preparations and fled. No wonder, for at that instant came into the room the great bear, Chonwa's friend! The queen fainted, and the king in trying to help her stumbled headlong over her. Prince Hammie—so they called him at the court—drawing his sword, made an awkward thrust at the beast, who raised a great paw, and smote him on the head, rolling him over and over like a barrel. By this time the company had scattered and hid!

The princess was delighted to see her old friend, and she gave Bruin a tight hug. The guests, venturing from their hiding-places, were more astonished than before. Still more were they amazed to see Chonwa bestride the grinning bear and ride out of the palace! Out into the garden she rode, past the soldiers, down the busy street and into a neighboring forest.

The king and queen were wild with grief, and the unlucky Hammie, chagrined at his bride's escape, bit his long finger nails. A reward was offered for the head of the old bear, and the hand of the princess was promised to the young man who should bring Chonwa safely home.

Meanwhile, as Chonwa dismounted in the forest, she became aware of a young man coming to-

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ward her. He was dressed in white and carried a black broad-brimmed hat. Chonwa at once recognized Mousan, the banished prince!

"I cannot tell you," said the prince, "how thankful I am to find you; I have waited all these months wondering what had become of you!"

Bruin gathered the two thankful children in her arms and, opening her mouth, began to talk.

"My dear Chonwa," she began, "I have come to bring you to a land more beautiful than any you have ever imagined, where play is as work and work is as play. We shall proceed to the Eastern mountains and then trace the beautiful river Nak-tong-kang to the sea, finally to settle down in a wonderful home by ourselves."

But her words of comfort were interrupted by the appearance of a funny-looking fat man. His eyebrows were so long that he had them braided, and they hung over his ears like spectacles. Between his thumb and finger he held a highly polished stone. He explained that he was Hu-Mok, the Stone Doctor, who could cure all diseases.

The bear growled, but Chonwa begged the Stone Doctor to cure her eyes, which had been weakened from wearing the veil. Whereupon he slapped his knees and held the stone before her

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gaze. Suddenly the girl felt a peculiar dizziness. She felt her eyes getting larger and larger, and the Doctor kept getting bigger and bigger—and then she knew no more; she had fainted.

Mousan caught her as she fell, and the bear lifted her right paw and smote the Doctor a heavy blow. He went sprawling to the grass and his stone lodged in a nearby tree. It took some time to revive the girl.

Meanwhile, the Doctor had recovered sufficiently to sit up. He was a pitiful-looking object. His eyes were bloodshot and his hair stood up as if he had had a bad dream. "Oh, give me my stone! Oh, give me my precious stone! "Oh!" moaned the doleful old quack.

Mouwou growled, showing her great white teeth and raising her terrible paw, at which he became silent.

But so angered was Mousan by the false Doctor's wicked trick, that he rushed upon him, grabbed his eyebrow whiskers, and dragged him off howling.

Scarcely had the two disappeared from view of the others, than the quack sprang like a tiger upon the young prince and bore him to the ground;

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then he placed his hand upon the boy's mouth to prevent him from yelling for help.

"Now!" hissed the furious Hu-Mok, who was twice as strong as any ordinary man, "I shall teach you a thing or two!" Mousan struggled to escape, but the strong one planted a heavy foot on his neck and kept it there till he was senseless. Cautiously the villain looked around lest some one should see, then dragged his victim to his den.

When the princess had revived completely, the bear persuaded her to mount her back again. Bruin at this time had not guessed that there was anything wrong with her other charge; so when the princess asked her where Mousan was, she merely replied that he had gone to punish the Doctor.

They had not gone very far when they saw a snake charming a little bird. The bird could not move from its perch, but stood screaming and flapping its wings in terror. The old bear rushed at the reptile and struck it a deadly blow. At once the grateful bird flew to its rescuers. It perched upon the shoulder of the girl and rubbed its smooth feathers against her cheek, while the snake wiggled away to die.

So this queer trio passed through the woods, the bird on Chonwa's shoulder and the girl on the

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bear's back. They were surprised and delighted when they came to a little thatched shanty on which was a sign with the words, "Rest for the Weary."

"Do let us rest here till Mousan catches up!" begged eager Chonwa. She dismounted, approached the house, and peered in. There she saw, to her delight, a beautiful woman lying on a couch reading.

She knocked gently and the woman came out smiling, and holding a glass of wine. Chonwa was very thirsty but when she was about to take the drink, the woman opened her mouth, and behold, a cloven tongue darted out!

Chonwa dropped the glass and fled in fear.

The woman was the serpent come to life again. The instant Chonwa saw her mistake the woman changed back into the snake and began to pursue her.

The bear was some distance away and so could not help her charge. The snake was almost upon the princess, when the little bird flew with all its strength against the open mouth of the reptile. By flapping its tiny wings in the serpent's eyes, the bird prevented it from biting. But the frail rescuer received the blow intended for Chonwa, and

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fell to the ground in great agony, though it was not seen by the others.

Mouwou quickly arrived at the scene of danger. Angry as fire, she smote the snake a terrible blow on the head, crushing it. Then, unable to find the gallant bird, the two went on.

Finally they came to a very pretty resting place by a brook that gurgled and sang a sweet song all day and all night. Like a good mother, the bear placed the tired girl on a patch of moss and sang her to sleep.

When Chonwa awoke she was much refreshed, and at once inquired about Mousan.

The bear, too, had been worrying about the prince. To the princess she said: "Do not be afraid—I'll go in search of him. Stay right in this spot, and do not believe everything that you hear." So saying, she lumbered out of sight.

No sooner had the bear-mother gone than the little wounded bird came crawling toward the maid. "I am dying, dear friend," it sobbed, "and I want to see you before I go. You have been so good to me!" Then the bird's voice became faint, and its eyes opened wide as in a death-stare.

"Oh! Oh!" sobbed Chonwa. "You must not die! You saved my life." But the bird was past

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saving, for the poison was doing its work quickly.

At that instant, a voice was heard calling sweetly: "Mushrooms! Mushrooms! Sure cure for all diseases. This way, gentle girl. I can help you. See how delicious."

Chonwa saw a strange little humpbacked man. He was scarcely three feet tall. His face looked old, but his voice was like that of a little choir-boy. In a dish he carried about a dozen mushrooms. They were hot and had been roasted in butter and salt, and they filled the air with a fragrance that made Chonwa's mouth water.

But she, remembering how the woman had fooled her, was afraid.

"Who are you?" demanded Chonwa.

"I am a great cook," said the man, bowing low. "I have cooked for your father many a time. You have tasted my dishes before. I am now cooking for the queen of the forest. See, princess, just try it on that little bird. My cooking acts like medicine."

With Chonwa's consent, he thrust a little particle down the bird's throat. The bird revived instantly and stood up and chirruped with delight.

Nevertheless, the mushrooms were poison. The hunchback was Mikado, the snake-woman's slave,

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and the mushrooms were the wicked woman turned into food. As poison cures poison, the poisoned mushrooms had acted as an antidote and the bird was saved. But the child not knowing the laws of chemistry, believed that the mushrooms were good food, as well as fine medicine, so she helped herself to the appetizing dainties. Soon she felt drowsy and laid herself down. The hunchback kicked his heels in the air and danced with joy. "I am saved!" he shouted. He had been promised a straight back, such as he had before he followed the evil woman, if he could succeed in destroying one life.

"Ha, ha! My back will soon be straight," he sang out. "Ha! Am I not clever? Already I feel my hump getting—!"

"Straight!" growled Mouwou, who at that moment appeared. Her tongue hung out, red with heat, and her breast was covered with flaked foam. Her eyes blazed fire and her voice sounded like the rumbling of thunder.

The cook's tune of mirth was instantly changed to wails for mercy. His hair stood on end, his jaws relaxed, and his eyes almost swelled out.

"Yes!" said the bear. "I'll straighten you, mis-

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erable cook!" She lifted her huge paw and brought it down with terrible force upon the hump.

"Ouch! Ouch!" yelled the dancer, as his hump pushed through and thrust out before him. He was hump-chested now!

"There!" said the bear. "Henceforth, you'll follow your hump. You won't have to carry it on your back any more!"

While Mouwou was dealing with the cook, the little bird was furiously picking at Chonwa's swollen neck. She picked and picked until a hole was made in the skin. Immediately a snake ran out and disappeared in the grass. Mouwou turned to the princess and began to scratch her arm. Several snakes fell out and the bear killed them. Again and again she scratched, till more than twenty snakes had come out and been killed.

The princess was soon entirely well. As it was growing dark, the mother made a cozy bed of leaves and bade her good night. With a prayer for the safety of Mousan. Chonwa fell asleep.

In the morning, just before they started on their hunt, the bird took a little flight to exercise its wings. It returned with the information that the hunchback was lying not far away in much pain. Following the bird, Chonwa and the bear

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found the hunchback rolling on the ground, apparently too weak to stand. He thought his head had been twisted round, because he could see his hump, a thing he never could do before! He had spent the greater part of the night in rolling over and over trying to twist his head so that the back would be where the face was. When he saw the bear, he begged her to untwist him.

"I'll twist your pin-head for you, you rascal," she said, "if that is all that you want!"

So saying, with one wrench she turned his face around till he was really looking backward.

The man rose to his feet with great difficulty and proceeded to walk, but to his astonishment he walked backward. His feet went the usual way, but as his head was looking backward, he could not see where he was going, and he bumped into a tree. He tried to walk the way his nose pointed and he fell again and again. At last he gave it up and sat down.

He was more confused than ever to find himself buckling up in the way opposite to that to which he had been accustomed. Finally, down he went as his body would have it, and he found his nose against the tree instead of the back of his head. Sobbing loudly, he took his head in his

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hands and wept tears down the back of his neck.

"Oh, dear bear, cure me!" he moaned, "I am a miserable sinner and I deserve it all! But please give me a chance, and I shall do better in the future! Never again shall I associate with that snake woman! Never! I want to be good!" This was the very thing that the bear wanted, for it was very hard for her to seem so cruel to one in such pain.

The little princess, who had been crying, nodded approvingly at the bear, who immediately caught the man in her arms and righted his head to the proper place. Then she laid him on the ground and with one great whack made him a straight man again.

The wicked snake-woman had bent him in making him do her bidding. Now that he was well, he became a convert to the new life, and was added to the company of three. He volunteered to guide them to the house where the Doctor lived.

They started none too soon to look for Mousan, who at that time lay bound in a horrible den some distance off. After the quack had deposited the prince in his own cave, he went in search of his precious stone, which he quickly found. He returned in great glee to the cave. Entering, he sat

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on a low stool facing the boy, who was bound so that he could not move.

The Doctor then called for his pipe, and a horrid lizard crawled toward him with the pipe in its mouth. Then the man called loudly for his tobacco, and a great turtle crawled forward with it on his back.

Slowly the Doctor filled his pipe and lighted it. At the first puff his mouth was filled with dirt from the foul pipe, and he jumped in the air, yelling loudly. He landed on the turtle and slipped. In his anger, he kicked the lizard and jumped again and again upon the turtle's back, at which the turtle seized him by the leg. It was a grand mix-up for a few minutes. The prince could not help laughing, and once started he laughed till the tears rolled down his face.

Finally the Doctor freed himself from the turtle and rushed to the boy.

"You are laughing, eh!" he exclaimed, shaking his fist at Mousan. "I shall soon have you silenced!"

From his pocket he took his polished stone, which he placed in the prince's mouth. In a few minutes the boy was completely paralyzed. With eyes wide open and his hearing gone, he lay rigid all night.

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At break of day the quack came to his side and said: "Young man, I have made up my mind to teach you my art—on one condition. My work on earth is to make all men as miserable as possible. When I see a man at the height of his ambition, I step in and compel him to make a fool of himself, and down and out he goes. Ha! If I cannot ruin him that way, I tell something nasty about him to some deluded soul, who spreads the news to the mob, and presto! my man is done for. Again, I like to throw a microbe into the stomach of a healthy person and watch him squirm. Come, join me and I will teach you the art of the magic stone."

Freed from the spell, at the Doctor's will, the boy sat up and stretched his arms. But he shook his head to the proposal.

"Very well, then!" said the angry quack. Then he fastened about the prince's neck a chain attached to a pole, and left the cave.

At once a great swarm of ants came running toward the boy. He fought them off till he fell exhausted to the floor, his body covered with the nipping insects. The pain of a thousand bites made him feel that his end was near, and he closed his eyes, praying for death.

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The quack came again and offered him freedom, if he would become one of his followers. The prince made no reply; so his tormentor sat down to enjoy the sight of his dying victim.

Suddenly the cave was darkened. The Doctor turned and saw the bear! Staggering to his feet, he fled to an inner recess. Like a flash the bear rushed over the ants, freed the boy from his chains, carried him out, placed him upon the green grass, and began to lick his wounds.

In a few moments the prince opened his eyes, and upon the arrival of the princess and the little man, he was smiling. Water was brought from a nearby stream and Mikado washed Mousan's body and limbs.

"Mikado," said the bear, "I am going to find the quack and get his magic stone. Please look after things while I am gone. I'll cure the boy with the rascal's magic!"

In a few minutes the bear returned, holding in her paw the glistening stone. "Now," said she, "let all wish that the prince may become well again; and you, my dear Mousan, look at this stone.

They did so and Mousan recovered immediately. The poor boy could scarcely believe that

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he was well again and that his dear Chonwa was with him.


Then Mouwou gathered the children in her furry embrace.

"I am glad to have both of you alive with me this day, and that I can speak to you now knowing that you will understand. Obedience is the law of all creation, and he that disobeys will come to a very bad end. All the pain that you have witnessed, and some that you have endured, has come from disobedience to the law of kindness. But we shall forget the past and only think of the future. I have the Doctor's stone, and by this we shall be able to undo all the evil conjured up by that miserable fellow. The man himself I marked with a "Q," meaning quack, so that all who see him may know the truth. Come, let us be going to the great South Country."

The four picked up the trail and proceeded to the Land of Sunshine and Joy, ever obedient to the old bear.

The prince and the princess were married when they grew up, and lived very happily to ripe old age; and the rest of the story you will find written in the annals of Korea.

THE GRAY WITCH

N a city of which you all know the name lives a little girl who formerly was very naughty but now behaves much better than she did. This little girl was very beautiful, which made it seem all the more sad that she ever was naughty.

One day she was particularly bad and would do nothing to please anybody. She wanted to be petted, waited upon, and humored all the time. She fretted and whined so much, that when evening came, her mother was no longer able to endure her behavior, and sent her to bed immediately after supper.

As she lay dozing in her little cot, she remembered that she had not said her prayers. She would not get out of bed to say them, but muttered in a peevish voice: "I wish that God would punish all the wicked people I know! But there's no use praying anyway!"

No sooner had little Polly uttered these words, than a light flashed upon her astonished eyes. She

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sat up in bed and gazed in horror. Coming toward her was an old, stooped, wild-eyed woman, dressed in gray and carrying a big stick.

Polly tried to scream, but her voice seemed no louder than the squeak of a mouse. Then she tried to get out of bed and run to her mother, but could not move a foot, nor even a finger. Meanwhile the hag came nearer, and as she approached she grew more ugly.

Polly was already nearly dead with terror; yet what did the old woman do but reach her heavy hand and lift the child by her hair right out of bed! Then the frightful hag let her fall upon the floor, gave her a hideous look, and sharply commanded: "Follow me, pouter!"

In vain did Polly try to resist. Clad only in her nightdress, she followed her unwelcome guide out of the house. The night was cold, and the streets were muddy. After they had tramped about for a while, the witch stooped lower than ever and made Polly bestride her back; then she flew with her little rider to the Mountains. Here the hag stopped, and placing the child on the ground, commanded her to wish.

Poor Polly was afraid to speak.

"Ask! Ask!" the witch kept repeating, as she

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stood over Polly, shaking her long bony hand at her. "I give you five minutes to decide! Going—going—gone!"

At the last word the old woman clapped her hands together, making sparks fly.

Polly screamed with terror: "I only want to be good! Please!"

Then, for a long time, Polly remembered no more. Everything became dark, and she thought she was getting smaller and smaller, until suddenly she became a pin-point and pricked herself, as if she had been somebody else!

"Oh!" she exclaimed as she came to herself again. She looked about, and saw beautiful mountains all around. The valley in which she lay was green with grass and glowing with beautiful wild flowers. Not far off she could see a clear, sparkling river. She was clad in a new and lovely pink frock with stockings and shoes to match. What did it all mean?

The sun was already high in midheaven. As far as Polly's eyes could see, the scenery was entrancing. Birds sang in the branches, and squirrels ran to Polly and begged for nuts.

Then she heard the shout of little children, and saw twenty or more youngsters frolicking in a near meadow.

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When the children saw her they ran to meet her and made her very welcome. Soon she became quite at home among them.

Finally a little boy named Harry pointed with his finger; "See, it is dinner-time!" he said.

Polly looked where the boy pointed and was astonished to see a tall, stately clock-tower, rising high above all the mountains. The hands of the clock pointed to twelve.

"Oh! Oh!" exclaimed Polly. "Isn't it grand? Why didn't I notice it before?"

"Because," said Harry, "you were playing and not thinking about time."

At that instant the clock struck twelve. Then it chimed forth a sweet chant, more beautiful than anything that Polly ever had heard. It made her feel as though she were in heaven. But being still a child of earth, she clapped her hands and scampered off with the other children to the tower.

"How often, Harry, does that clock chime?" asked Polly.

"It plays music every quarter of an hour."

"How is it, then, that I did not hear the music before?"

"Do you really mean that you have not heard the clock chime all the morning? It has been play-

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ing right along. You must have seen that we children stopped playing for a few seconds now and then. At those times we were listening to the music."

The other children gathered about Polly, and when Harry told them about her failure to hear the chimes, they all began to laugh.

Polly could not bear to be laughed at so she cried bitterly; whereupon the other children scampered off.

Harry, however, tried to comfort the weeping child. "Polly," he pleaded, "never mind those children; they do not know any better."

Polly suddenly drew away from him. "I guess you told them things about me! Go away from me! You are a tattle-tale!"

She stamped her foot, and her eyes flashed. Harry turned and walked away sadly.

Suddenly to Polly all nature became very still and lonesome. She was sorry that all the children had gone, and she did not know where to find them. The great clock-tower too had disappeared. She began to be afraid once more. Sitting down on a stone she almost wished herself dead. No one loved her. The sun began to move toward the West and Polly was beginning to feel hungry as well as sad.

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But now occurred something that made her forget all about hunger: She saw the witch approaching her, looking more horrid than ever. When Polly tried to run, she found herself so badly frightened that she could not move from the spot.

"Oh, please, please, good woman," pleaded Polly, falling on her knees, "don't take me away from these fields. I know I was naughty, but I will try to do better in the future. Please—don't take me away!"

Instead of scolding and threatening, as Polly feared, the hag gently patted her on the head, saying: "So you want to stay here. My child, no one can stay here who wishes evil and is stubborn."

"I'll be good—I'll be good," pleaded Polly.

"Then, child, you shall have your wish," replied the old woman, disappearing from the scene.

As soon as the witch was gone, Polly rose from her knees and wished for Harry, but wishing did not bring him. Feeling tired after so much excitement, she lay down and peacefully drifted into dreamland.

She was aroused by Harry's voice.

"Polly! Polly!" he was gently calling until she opened her large blue eyes. "It is past dinner-

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time," he said, "and if you do not hurry there will be no good things to eat."

"Oh, Harry, Harry!" she cried. "I have been very, very naughty!"

Happily they walked toward the great clock tower, which had become visible again to Polly. She afterward learned that her vision changed with her mood. In this land, if she was cranky and irritable she saw snakes and toads and worms and other creeping things, while if she was good she saw only singing birds and laughing waters and other beautiful objects.

When the two entered the hall, most of the other children were leaving. Polly followed her friend to a seat and began to enjoy the good things on the table.

After they had eaten, Harry led her about the building and showed her its many wonders. They were about to leave when Polly discovered a picture that startled her. It appeared to be a large painting of two children, walking together, and an old hag dragging after.

"Oh, Harry!" exclaimed Polly, starting back, "it is the picture of the gray witch! Come, let us run!"

She turned to flee but Harry caught her. "Yes,

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Polly," he said in surprise, "it is the witch, but she is not ugly but beautiful. If you knew her you would like her. She loves all of us very dearly. It is she who gave you that fine dinner!"

"I do not believe it! She is horrid—I hate her!" shouted Polly. "She is always scolding me."

"You must be mistaken, Polly. She is the kindest woman in all the world!"

Polly turned to look at the picture again. It had changed. The girl was a saucy little minx, but the boy was full of grace and beauty. The witch was smiling.

"Why," whispered Polly, "that boy looks like you! But how wild the little girl looks! The witch is smiling. I never saw the old thing look like that before."

"It is not a painted picture at all," said Harry, "but only a mirror."

"Oh," screamed Polly, turning round to find the witch. But the old woman was gone. Polly glanced at the mirror again, and there stood the two children alone.

"I hope the witch did not hear what I said about her," she exclaimed.

They left the building and wandered along a pretty green carpeted road. A fat goose with her

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brood of goslings waddled after them, gabbling something that sounded like this: "Wait for us! We want to go too. My little children cannot walk so fast. Hold on! Hold on there!"

Polly stopped and beckoned to the old thing. Immediately the mother with her group of children came to her. She said that her goslings were the finest children in all the land. "Why," she said, "they walked as soon as they were born! Not like humans, who have to be nursed and cradled for years before they know anything. My children began to do for themselves when they were an hour old. Now humans are stupid till they are taught a trade with which to earn a living. There are no idle children among my youngsters."

"I have always heard people say 'as foolish as a goose,' " replied Polly. "I am never going to say that again, for I see that I was mistaken. I should have said 'as stupid as human children!' "

When all were rested they started off to the half-mile creek to see the big bullfrogs.

"Now watch, Polly," said Harry, when they reached the banks, "and you will see the great prince of the frogs. He comes out about this time of the day to review his subjects. There is the band coming already. Like other monarchs,

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he likes to be preceded by a great swell of music. The people of Frogdom must be impressed."

Sure enough, there swam into view a company of frogs, big and little. They swam to a little island and leaped up the bank. The leader, who was a little larger than the others, faced them and waved a small twig. Immediately the frog band struck up.

It was a strange band indeed. They had all the parts, from the bass up to a high treble. The water trombones sat breast deep in the water so that they produced a very delightful music. Others stood on their toes and rubbed themselves against the tall grass to produce a violin effect. The big frogs played bass; the little fellows shrilled like piccolos.

The children clapped their hands and sang to the accompaniment of the frog band. The old goose swung her head from side to side, keeping time with the music, while the goslings sang all of the tunes they knew. When the band played a familiar cake-walk, they waddled about the bridge as gracefully as goslings could, with their necks joined together.

Suddenly the band ceased, and the children beheld a very large bullfrog sitting on a pond lily

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drawn by eight little frogs. Dreamily the car of state floated toward the little island.

"It is the king," whispered Harry.

The big lazy frog landed at the island, followed by a great host of froggies. Then he stood up and his subjects bowed low. When the band struck up the national anthem of Frogdom, all the frogs cheered and waved their hands. Then they had games and contests to please his majesty. Some turned somersaults, some in swimming races made wonderful time, while others strutted on their hind legs to see who could do it longest.

The old goose was very much annoyed at the haughty ways of the frog king, and she muttered something about people making too much of themselves. "I would like to teach that fat fellow that he is better able to draw those little frogs than they are to draw him!" she declared as she jumped into the water and swam to the island.

As soon as she reached shore, she waddled up to the king, who was addressing his subjects. Nobody noticed her approach and their astonishment knew no bounds when she appeared among them hissing loudly. The king was so startled that he broke down in his speech, and his subjects lost no time in diving deep into the water.

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The ruler was left alone and defenseless. The goose seized him by his fat sides, and swallowed his majesty. The king was no more. His bereaved subjects wailed, and the band played a mournful tune, as they saw their monarch disappearing, inch by inch, down the long neck of the goose.

Mrs. Goose turned upon the crowd. "You simpering loons!" she hissed, what are you mourning over? A lost king? No, but over your own stupidity. Now you are free and I advise you to set up no more monarchs; if you do, I shall turn my goslings loose upon you." So saying she swam back again and waddled about on the bridge.

After this exciting incident the children took off their shoes and paddled in the cool stream. Polly was delighted to feel the little fishes nibbling at her toes. When this enjoyment was at its height, they were surprised to see a little man gliding toward them in a little boat. He came paddling against the stream, singing as he dipped the blade into the water. He was a handsome fellow and sat bravely in his wee cockleshell.

"Get in my children," he said. "I have been sent to bring you to the great palace."

The Gray Witch

"But," protested Polly, "the boat is no longer than my own body."

"Nothing can be accomplished without trying," said the little boatman, so they stepped in and instead of sinking, the boat rose just a little out of the water. It was certainly a magic boat. And when the boatman plied his paddle the little vessel skimmed like a swallow along the surface. Upstream they glided, passing under many bridges. It was the most delightful trip that Polly had ever taken.

Just below the landing was a bend in the stream and as they rounded it a magnificent landscape suddenly popped into view. A splendid building stood close to the landing. It was known as the River Castle. As the children sprang out, a merry group of youngsters came running to meet them. An acquaintance began at once, and soon Polly and Harry were playing with the other children as if they had known one another for years.

By and by there was a lull in the play, and Polly's eyes wandered to the great tall building. She had not carefully observed the high eight-sided tower, whose top was lost to view in the clouds. Its sides were set with bell-shaped disks, made of different metals—some of gold, some of silver, and

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others of copper. As the light of the setting sun shone upon them, the scene was beyond description.

"What is that?" whispered Polly grasping an arm of her friend, and pointing toward the castle.

"That is the great reflector. Every sound that has ever been made is repeated here," explained Harry. "Even the growing corn may be heard singing as it grows."

They were interrupted by the striking of the old town-clock. They counted the strokes—one, two, three, four, five. They seemed many miles away.

"It is the old clock in the tower," whispered Polly.

The disks took up the sweet notes and magnified them till they sang a thousand times more sweetly. Then the chimes struck up their beautiful music. The children stood with bowed heads as they heard the grand harmonies of heaven.

When the music had ended, the boy and the girl sat silent for many minutes. Then Polly looked up and saw the witch standing before them, and all her old fears returned.

"Well Polly," said the old woman, "are you still afraid of me?"

The Gray Witch

Then a magic spell was wrought. Polly looked in astonishment. The hag had changed from an old withered thing to a very beautiful young woman.

"You thought that I was ugly, little girl. Now that you are feeling better and happier I appear to you as wonderful as your own thoughts. People always have the things they desire—that is, if they truly desire them. We are what we make ourselves. No matter how crippled or distorted we may be, still we may be happy and beautiful if we so desire. Happiness is within and is not to be chased like a butterfly and bagged."

Now Polly was not so sure that she liked the witch after all; in fact, she wished that she would go away and leave them alone. In a moment the woman changed to an ugly creature again. Polly started to run away but the witch caught her up in her arms and hugged her close, and when she was through the witch again became the lovely creature that she had been a few moments ago.

"Now you must not think wicked thoughts," said she; "if you do, I shall have to remain ugly. If you only knew how it hurts to be ugly I believe you would try to be good, if only for my sake."

"Please, mother," pleaded the child, "if you



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forgive me this time I shall always be good because I want to, both for your sake and because I wish to be good. I am very much ashamed of myself."

Polly threw her arms around the good mother and hugged her. From that hour, they became friends. And sitting down on the grass the good woman explained the working of the tower.

"That spire," she said, "reaches to heaven and has millions and millions of disks on its sides. These instruments are the sound-receivers of the whole world. Every sound is magnified and made sweeter by the condensers. Every prayer, every song, and every musical note is caught here and made clearer and stronger. Every good deed done is praised and every kind word reechoed."

"Did you say," inquired the girl, "that every angry word or wicked prayer is retold on these bells? That would be terrible!" Polly was thinking of her own naughty thoughts.

"Yes, my dear," answered the woman, "everything is heard here. But the strange thing about the bells is that a wicked thing is a thousand times reduced. These disks repeat everything good that is said and throw it back to the poor old world to brighten the speaker and the world itself. Good thoughts, too, are reflected and sent to earth again

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to gladden human beings. Wicked things are detected and examined, but only good things are sent to earth again."

Then the woman led the children a short distance from the tower and asked them to listen.

"Oh! Oh!" screamed Polly, "I heard a bad word."

"Yes," explained the woman, "you heard that word before it reached the bells; but if you were to listen, it would be so changed that you would not recognize it. But let us go and see other things about the great steeple."

She led them to the base of the building and showed them a queer-looking register that worked like a modern adding machine. A ribbon continually ran out of one end and was rolled on a big spool.

"This," explained the guide, "records every deed done by everybody in the world. It is connected with the disks and never gets out of tune."

They examined the machine, and saw millions and millions of spools slowly rolling as the minutes passed. There was a spool for each individual that ever lived on earth. At every one's death his spool was laid away in the great tower above.

The Gray Witch

"Isn't it wonderful?" exclaimed Polly. "I should like to see my spool, dear mother."

The woman took the girl to the back of the machine and showed her her own life-spool. The ribbon was very small, but the guide detached it and gave it to the child to read. As she unwound it, she read: "I wish that God would punish all the wicked people I know!" Polly dropped the spool and hid her face: these were her own words.


"Do not feel badly, dear Polly," whispered the mother, "and do not look now for any more bad records of yourself; but fill the rest of the spool with good words and good deeds, and in the end your record will be rewritten, made bright and clear." She then picked the girl up and held her to her breast, kissing her tenderly.

At this moment Polly heard the disks ring out: "Polly!" and she cried, "Goodie! Goodie!"

It was her mother calling her for breakfast. Polly sat up and rubbed her eyes. "Oh, mamma—where is the mother witch? Where is Harry?"

Her mother looked puzzled at first, but she quickly realized that her little daughter had been dreaming. "I'll be the mother witch, my dear," she said, "and we will find Harry some day soon."

MR. ROOSTER

N a certain back yard lives a colony of most interesting chickens. You could not imagine that feathered things would perform such capers as they do.

One fine morning, after Mrs. Black Hen had spent a restless night on the roost, she addressed Mrs. Brown Hen with these words:

"Do you know, Brownie, my husband snores, and I did not sleep a wink last night!"

"Just to think of that! A snoring husband is a dreadful thing," Brownie returned.

Brownie cackled all day from group to group about the snoring husband. The gossip grew as the day advanced till all the hens were cackling and exchanging winks and the rooster, thinking that the hens were laying an unusual number of eggs, crowed with great zest. This amused the hens very much, for, without knowing it, the rooster was making fun of himself. He would have been extremely angry had he known the truth.

Mr. Rooster

The poor hens cackled themselves into fits over the thing. It was so funny!

The cook of the house to which the back yard belonged at once thought that the poor creatures had "the gapes." Now the gapes is nearly always fatal, but sometimes death may be averted by an application of red pepper. No wonder the cook was mistaken, for by this time the hens were rolling, kicking and cackling. The rooster was sitting on the fence almost shouting his head off.

But when the cook ran out of the house and dosed every hen with Cayenne pepper, the surprised chickens sprang to their feet and rushed about madly. All the fun was gone. Some of them leaned against the coop and gasped for breath, while others rushed for the watering trough.

During the performance, the rooster flew to the highest place possible and screamed with delight, for he had at last gotten through his thick head that the joke had been on him, but was now on his wives.

Oh, but the hens were mad! That evening they crept to bed with tears in their little red eyes and vengeance in their small hearts. It had been agreed to watch the old fellow and see if it was true that he was a snorer. Not a hen slept that night.

Mr. Rooster

All went as usual till about eleven o'clock, when suddenly the rooster opened his mouth and screamed, "Cock-a-doodle-doooo!"

This was not really snoring, as you easily see, but a natural burst of pride, praise and warning to keep the bogies away. Nevertheless, the hens in their bad temper were no judges of any matter, let alone snoring in the middle of the night. They nudged each other very wisely. They had caught him at last and there were twenty witnesses. One o'clock came and he repeated the same words. The hens were delighted, for they would have their innings in the morning.

When morning came, the hens openly twitted the rooster about his snoring. At first he paid little attention to their taunts, but as the day wore on he became very much exasperated. The hens kept their own quarters and refused to have anything to do with him, and he, manlike, was determined to be near them. Whenever he came into their "midst," as they chatted, they just left him there twiddling his fine wings. He was much enraged and gave chase to many of them. Sometimes he almost caught one; but when that was about to happen, the others pitched in and drove him off



Mr. Rooster

very much crestfallen. The hens were wise enough that day to stand together.

When all had retired as usual, the hens waited for the rooster to enter their coop. But he did not come. Some suggested that they should go in a body and compel his majesty to come home. He had never before remained out all night, as some husbands do! They had a hard time sleeping that night, for they greatly missed the rooster.

But the rooster sat all the while on the back fence vowing vengeance.

About three o'clock in the morning, when all was still, one of the hens felt a sharp pain in her breast. She wakened and scrambled to her feet, but was instantly dragged to the floor by a weasel. She screamed and struggled to escape. The other hens joined in the clatter. It was with the greatest difficulty that she escaped with her life.

The weasel fled when the noise became pronounced, for he was afraid of a human. The poor hen was terribly wounded. Not a wink of sleep had the hens the remainder of that night, and they were glad when the sun rose. They sought the rooster and told the hard-hearted fellow the awful story of the night raid, but he just opened his mouth and crowed with pleasure. They were in-

Mr. Rooster


dignant and walked off and left him to his laughs.

In the afternoon, when all was the quietest in Chickenville, the rooster joined his wives and talked very seriously about what had occurred. "Now," said he in conclusion, "this trouble has been brought about through gossip. You have had your fun and I have had mine. The best thing to do is to let bygones be bygones and all of us turn over a new leaf."

The hens unwillingly consented, for the sun was setting and they feared the night.

Since then Mr. Rooster has enjoyed great comfort, and whenever the hens begin to gossip he opens his red mouth and screeches "RED PEPPER!"

THE MID-EARTH PEOPLE

UNCLE RUPERT, the children's friend, had just returned from a wonderful trip through the Orient and therefore had many startling things to tell to his nephews and nieces. He was such a famous story-teller that when he described anything the children actually thought they saw it happening.

On the sunny afternoon of Easter day, the children begged their uncle to take them to a park and tell them all about his trip. Uncle Rupert was quite willing, and fifteen minutes later a dozen boys and girls, accompanied by a big man, started on a street car to the park.

"I am not going to tell you anything now about my trip abroad," began Uncle Rupert when they reached their destination, "for this is Eastertide and I wish to talk about Easter!"

"Oh! Oh!" cried the whole crowd, "Please don't! Tell us something more interesting! We have had one sermon today, and it was—pretty dry."

The Mid-Earth People

Uncle Rupert smiled and, raising his head, began again: "I will let you be the judges as to the dullness of so-called 'moral' stories after we are through. If you are not satisfied, then I shall jump off this cliff!"

With this assurance, twelve eager bodies sat in silence waiting for him to begin.

"Are you all ready?" asked Uncle Rupert. "Then place your hands on your knees. Now, Tom, do not crowd Madge. That is the right way; heads up and eyes to the front. One, two, three and we are off."

"Here he is! See the little man? He is just coming out from a hole in the ground, opposite you."

The children looked and, to their amazement, saw a midget crawling from the earth. He was dressed in tight-fitting breeches of blue with stockings to match. Red shoes, with golden buckles, were on his feet, and hanging over his shoulders was a rich crimson cape, fastened about his throat with a pearl clasp. At his belt dangled a highly polished sword, and in his hand he carried a black plumed hat. Not a sign of a beard was on his face, and his hair hung in curls on his back. He looked as though he had stepped out of an old fashion plate.

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The youngsters were too surprised to move or speak; they hardly dared to breathe, for fear that he would vanish. The stranger walked toward Uncle Rupert and bowed to him.

"Well, sir, who are you?" demanded the big uncle, "and what brings you here?"

"I am an exile just banished from my own country," said the little man. "King Vitius and his selfish wife drove me away because I have always said that there is a better country above us."

"Oh!" exclaimed Madge, "what stupid people they must be not to know of this beautiful America."

The man sobered, and Uncle Rupert asked him: "Where is this dull world, and what is your name?"

"My name is Pietas, and our people live in the center of the earth," replied the dwarf.

Uncle Rupert smiled as he watched the children staring with wide-open mouths.

"We shall all go with you," began the wily story-teller, looking out of the corner of his eye to see how his scheme was taking, "and help you to regain your place in your own land."

"I cannot go back, because they would kill me;

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and besides, if I told them what I have seen today, they would laugh me to scorn."

"We shall go and force them to take you back!" exclaimed Tom.

"But I do not want to go back," answered the little man. "This is a glorious country. Our sun does not shine so brightly as yours. If my people only knew the truth, they would never think of their country as the greatest and best one. It is a poor gloomy world."

"But!" pleaded Madge, "you can return with us when we have fulfilled our mission of proving what you told the king."

Pietas agreed, on these terms, and turning on his heels, beckoned them to follow. All started after him, and when they got to the hole that the midget had come out of, he sprang lightly down a small embankment and disappeared through the opening into a cave below.

"Come!" said Tom, jumping in after him, "let us hurry."

They all followed without hesitation. Uncle Rupert was the last to go down.

When they had gone about a quarter of a mile through the underground passage, it became so dark that they lost their way.

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"I wonder where Pietas is?" shouted Uncle Rupert. "The rascal has deserted us. Come, boys, let us call his name."

The children screamed, "Pietas!" three or four times, and then the little fellow appeared with a lantern.

"What do you mean by deserting us, Pietas?" asked Uncle Rupert.

"I was hoping you would not follow me," answered the dwarf; "and I was wishing that you would get tired and give up the venture. It may mean death to us all."

Fear now showed itself in the company, and some wanted to turn back, but others begged Uncle Rupert to go on, and after much talk it was decided to proceed. Tom was chosen leader, Pietas and Uncle Rupert were the guides, and in double column they began their journey.

Suddenly as they strode along at a brisk pace, the earth slid from beneath them, and they fell feet first, down, down—they did not know where. Filled with terror, they could only think of what might happen when they struck something.

At last, with a great jolt, they landed and went sprawling in all directions. When they scrambled to their feet they were glad to be alive, and for a

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few moments they stood there panting and wondering.

"Well, of all things!" exclaimed Uncle Rupert, "that was a terrible fall! I wonder where we are now? Tell us, Pietas."

Pietas said they had fallen three miles. But the force of gravity being not so strong near the center of the earth they did not fall as fast as they would have fallen near the surface. They were near his own kingdom, he said, and a walk of about a hundred yards would bring them to the alligator's tail.

"Do not be afraid of the animal, my dear people," he said, "for he cannot harm you. We shall find the monster lying in the path. We shall walk on the beast for a number of yards, but he cannot harm us nor shake us off. There will be a little danger when we get to the head, but if we jump from his nose without falling, no harm can come to us. The name of the creature is Mortuus, and he is dangerous only to those who try to leave our kingdom. Few have escaped his deadly bite when doing that. But let us move on at once."

The children did not hesitate to follow, for Uncle Rupert gave them confidence. When they came to the great tail, they stepped lightly upon it

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and walked along, as they might have walked on board an ocean liner.

"Hist!" exclaimed Pietas, "let us all gather together and get ready to run and jump off the end of his snout. This is the beginning of the Middle Earth Kingdom."

Uncle Rupert took little Bee in his arms, and the rest followed the dwarf, with Uncle Rupert in the rear.

They walked with some difficulty upon the great head of the alligator, for he kept opening and shutting his jaws. When he opened his mouth, they seemed to be going uphill, and when he shut it, they felt as if they were sliding downhill. How the boys did enjoy it! But the girls found the road a little rough.

When they came to jump off, Uncle Rupert showed them how to do so while the jaws were shut; then the fall was only seven or eight feet, whereas, with the mouth open, it would have been at least a hundred feet.

As soon as they had all landed safely, the monster began to roar like fifty bulls. He must have been disappointed at losing his supper.

But the children turned their backs on Mortuus and ran about a level field, gathering black roses

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and gazing upon the strange scenery that lay before them.

They had never seen such peculiar flowers. All natural things were of a somber hue because there was so little sunlight. But the girls were pleased with the new sights and the boys took off their shoes and waded in the brooks, chasing little fish.

To Uncle Rupert it was no wonder that the people would not believe what Pietas said about the better land, seeing that they had to face the monster alligator in their journey to the United States.

"Pietas," said Uncle Rupert, "I do not believe we shall be able to convince your people, for the only entrance to the upper country is so horrible. If we could only kill or disable the monster, we might succeed in bringing your people out of this place."

"Yes," replied the dwarf, "and besides no one has ever come back to tell about the other country. I am the first to return from there, and I hope, through your help, to be able to make my people believe my report. As for the monster, I am no longer afraid of him. If you and the boys will help me, perhaps we can put out his eyes so that he will not be able to harm people that come to

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him on their journey upward. Then, too, they can easily step onto his nose when he shuts his mouth, and when he opens it again he will lift them so that they can walk along his huge carcass and go on their way."

In a hurried conference, the boys worked out a plan. While the girls were left playing in the meadow, the boys, led by Uncle Rupert, cautiously approached the brute.

They found it hard to keep from being sucked into the gaping mouth, but by holding fast to one another they avoided that danger, while Uncle Rupert lifted Pietas, armed with his little sword, and threw the tiny fellow onto the snout. As the beast opened his mouth, thinking that his dinner had come, Pietas slid down his back out of danger.

The children kept at a safe distance and watched the little man as he crept toward the creature's left eye. When near enough, with his sword he made a quick thrust which put that eye quite out. The alligator roared in pain, and threw open his jaws with such force as to pitch Pietas into the air, whence he fell at the feet of the astonished party of boys. The fellow was badly hurt, and they had to carry him to a nearby brook, where they bathed his bruises. He soon recovered and

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became light-hearted again, although he was sorry that he had not put out both of the alligator's eyes.

"But," said Uncle Rupert, if we approach him on his blind side, we may still be able to escape the danger."

The roaring of the monster brought the girls to the place, and when they found that the party were all safe, they asked Pietas to take them to see his people. Uncle Rupert and the boys joined in the request, and so Pietas led the way and they all followed.

They came to a good road that led through a beautiful country. This highway crossed a very large river. Uncle Rupert explained to the children that this was the source of one of the greatest rivers of America. They passed over the bridge and approached a little village. As they walked through the streets of the town the little pygmies, not bigger than babies, cried after them: "There go the giants!"

Their destination was the Royal City, which they could see as soon as they got out of the village. It was a beautiful sight. There nestled the city in the peculiar dull atmosphere, its spires and tall buildings shining with pure gold.

Before they reached the city, they were seen

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by some of the king's men. They had thought that the country was well rid of the hated Pietas. Great were their surprise and disgust when they saw him back and in company with giants. He had told them that he would return some day and prove to them the truth of all he had said. Here he was, and what were they to do?

The king hastily called his wise men together, and had a few words with them. They determined to capture Pietas if possible, and to destroy the giants. The army was called out and prepared to meet the enemy and disturber at the gate. The children were indeed surprised, when they arrived at the entrance, to be met by an army of pigmies, although they did not look dangerous for they were so small. The party supposed that the army had been sent out to greet them and Uncle Rupert had prepared in his mind a long speech of thanks. But things were different from what they imagined.

A guard, consisting of a captain and a few subordinates, approached them, and the captain, walking up to Pietas said: "In the name of his Majesty we arrest you as a disturber of the public conscience."

"But," said Uncle Rupert, "this man has done

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nothing to deserve arrest. We brought him hither so that we might confirm the things that he has told you. He is no disturber of the public conscience."

But without paying any attention, the soldiers began to march off with their prisoner. The children knew that this meant death to poor Pietas.

Uncle Rupert looked at his companions to see what they wanted to do about it. He had not long to wait, for Tom, who was as big as four of the soldiers, snatched Pietas from the guard and shoved the captain over. Thereupon the guard fled, and the captain, scrambling to his feet, ran after his men.

"I'll beat the whole bunch myself!" boasted Tom as he rolled up his sleeves.

Pietas begged the Americans to return and leave him to his fate, but they would not. Then the pygmy army prepared to charge the little band and take him if they could.

"Please," said Pietas, "let me meet my people in my own way. I feel that I am to blame for bringing you here."

"No, you are not!" cried all the children with one breath. "Indeed not," added Uncle Rupert.

Pietas smiled and then turned and fled to the

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armed men. In vain did Tom and others call him back. The party watched as he quietly gave himself up to the law of his people. The soldiers wheeled and marched with their captive to the palace of the king. A mob quickly gathered around the Americans and began to threaten them.

"Beware, good people!" shouted Uncle Rupert. "Take care that you do not hurt a single hair of one of these children! We are not come to harm you, but to tell you a great truth. There is a fine country just above your heads where the sun shines all day and the stars come out in the evening; a land full of trees and birds and flowers and brooks. The air is not stuffy as it is here, nor is the place gloomy like this. All men and women are giants in our land. Now you have captured Pietas!" continued Uncle Rupert, coming to the business in hand. "I tell you that, if you do not let him go, we will fight this day for his freedom; and if we lose, be it known that our people will quickly send men to destroy your whole nation!"

To the surprise of the American party, Uncle Rupert's remarks were greeted with cheers of approval. The multitude of little folks gathered about the strangers and shook their hands. At last they believed the story of the other world.

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Many wished to go to America with the returning travelers.

Then Uncle Rupert led the whole crowd to the palace of the king, hoping to rescue poor Pietas. When they got there, the king was throned on a high platform, while Pietas, in chains, stood before him, the king's soldiers standing at rest and looking on.

Uncle Rupert made his way through the crowd of people and reached the platform.

There he turned to the soldiers and leaders and appealed to them for the life of his little friend.

The king arose with fear and asked: "Who art thou, great giant?"

"I am Rupert Randall, a citizen of the United States of America!"

"Do you speak of the Upper Country, sir, as this impudent Pietas has done?"

"I do, O King, and I wish that I could persuade you of the truth. Pietas is an honorable man and has tried to help your people, but you would not let him!"

The king wrung his hands and exclaimed: "I am determined to free Pietas now. I am puzzled beyond words, and fear I may be undone; but I shall set Pietas free."

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But the soldiers shouted: "Away with the imposter! He has declared against the army. He is no friend of the king. Besides, these Americans have insulted and abused our captain!"

The king tried to appease the multitude but they kept on crying for the life of Pietas. No one could speak, no one could hear, because of the screaming. At last the poor king motioned to the people to leave, and the soldiers took Pietas and marched him away.

The Americans followed at a little distance, watching for an opportunity to rescue their friend, but before they could interfere, the soldiers had bound Pietas to a tree.

Suddenly Tom and Madge rushed through the crowd and struck right and left, knocking soldiers and citizens down in their mad rush to pull their friend from the tree. Uncle Rupert, with the rest of the children, followed the brave little leaders.

In a few moments the rescuers had Pietas unbound and in their arms.

The poor fellow was all but unconscious from fright and rough usage. The soldiers fled before the giants as they carried their dear little friend away. Pietas revived, sat up, called all the people to his side, and told them he was glad that they had

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treated him so. "For," explained he, "they have not really hurt me, and I rejoice to suffer in witnessing to the truth."

No sooner had he spoken than many poor people came to him and begged to be allowed to go with him. He told them to remain and tell all the others the good news. "When you are through doing your duty, then I will come for you. Meanwhile, I am going with my friends to the Upper Country."

With sorrow he bade them good-by, and with the American party he turned and walked the road to the great alligator. At first, the children were afraid of the monster, but soon they cautiously approached him on his blind side, without attracting his attention. It was not difficult for them to spring upon his head; but when they had done so, the monster opened his mouth and threw them into the air and they rolled down his nose.

"Oh! Oh!" they shouted. It took them a few minutes to realize that they had been in the park all the time and that Uncle Rupert had been telling them a story. "Oh, Uncle, where is Pietas?" asked Madge. "Pietas," replied Uncle Rupert, "is not here, he has returned to his own country to tell

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his people more about his new home. He expects to lead all his people here some day.

"I have preached you a long sermon, my dears, and I do hope that you understood it. Pietas represented the Master who was killed but was revived by his Father to return again on Easter to tell his own country of the beautiful heaven and how to live so as to be worthy of it."


"Do tell us another story!" cried Madge. "We did so enjoy that one. Why, I thought that I was in the land of the Under World and I pitied the poor creatures there."

"So, my dear, do the saints pity us in this world; and they are hoping that we will be good, so that we may reach the Upper World.

"Now what do you say—shall I jump off the cliff?"

"No!" they all shouted.

THE BLACK HUS

O tell the complete story of the Black Hus would take as many years as civilized man has been on earth. The largest state in the Union is scarcely big enough to contain the books that could be written about the terrible monster.

Even today there is a Hus in every country, but this particular Hus lived in Greece many hundred years ago. It was related to the Hebrew Chazir spoken of in the Bible.

You remember the Chazir that attacked Noah when he was making merry in his tent. Noah was drinking some good wine, when all at once the beast rushed upon him, tore his clothing and seized him by the throat. When his sons came to his rescue, they found their father lying naked in his tent, in a helpless condition, and the dreadful Chazir standing over him. As soon as the beast saw the stalwart sons, he fled into the night.

You remember that it was Ham who laughed at his father's condition, because he had not seen

The Black Hus

the Chazir, but only his father's foolish condition. Ham's two brothers, Shem and Japheth, covered their father with a sheepskin blanket and went their way much wiser.

Passing now to Greece, we read of a nobleman there who had many sons and daughters. The eldest son, who was the apple of his eye, he called Egkartes because he was a good, honest fellow.

"Egkartes," the father said one day, "I am going to give you the next litter of pigs born on the farm."

This was a fine offer, for it meant the beginning of the boy's fortune.

Not long after this there was a family of thirteen little pigs on the farm. Twelve of the baby pigs were perfectly white, but one little fellow's skin was black as pitch, and his eyes were red as live coals. Almost as soon as he was born he began to show a savage disposition.

The black fellow soon awakened the curiosity of the neighborhood. No pig like him anywhere to be seen. He grew twice as fast as his little brothers, and daily became more savage. When eighteen months old, he weighed fifteen hundred pounds, and had to be kept in a separate pen and watched day and night for fear he would

The Black Hus

devour his brothers. People came from far and near to see the monster, and went away thanking their stars that he was not allowed to run at large.

One beautiful autumn day the nobleman gave a thanksgiving dinner for his freemen. The best of foods and drinks were served, and the men ate till they could eat no more, and drank till they could scarcely see. They became very noisy and filled the banqueting hall with such profane language that the Greek maids who had been engaged to dance for their amusement fled in fear.

No sooner had they gone than the black pig appeared in the hall. Some of the men rose to drive him back to his pen, but he would not go. He stood before their blurred eyes, shaking his ugly head and gnashing his terrible teeth.

Some of the stupid fellows thought that the pig must be mad; others said he must be a devil clothed in pig's flesh. They all kept a safe distance from him, hiding wherever they could, till at last Egkartes cautiously approached the monster, intending to lead him to his pen, as the youth had done on like occasions. But when as usual, he took the pig by the ear, the beast turned upon him with a thundering roar, seized his arm, and shook him as a terrier shakes a rat.

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Then the half-drunken father, staggering to his son's help, beat the animal over the head with a great stick; but this only increased the pig's fury, and dropping the boy, he ran amuck against the company, biting every man in the room.

One man, trying to escape by jumping over the pig, landed at full length on the creature's back, where he clung for dear life. The black pig did his best to shake the man off, but he held on with might and main. Round and round spun the pig squealing and grunting furiously. The man kept his hold so firmly, that at length some of his companions crept from their hiding places and cheered the plucky rider.

Finally the pig sprang through the door and ran for the open country, the man clinging to him like a "broncho-buster," while his companions—as many as were not too stupified by excess at table—gave chase, frantically shouting. Down the lane the strange steed charged, over the fence he leaped, madly shaking himself at every jump, and continued his career till he came to a narrow foot-bridge over a deep river, and tried to cross it. As he reached the middle of the bridge, he slipped and rolled into the stream below, carrying his rider with him.

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When he reappeared the man was swimming desperately for the bank, which he soon succeeded in reaching. The pig also landed safely and disappeared into the opposite woods.

"Well, boys!" exclaimed the pig rider, sobered, "that was a narrow escape! That little bridge saved my life. That was one time when I needed some one to help me let go!"

These men were a sorry-looking crew as they returned home tattered and torn. There was not a man among them with a whole garment.

The Hus never came back to the farm.

When the story of his antics was repeated from mouth to mouth, people would not believe it. But the monster was by no means through. A month later he appeared in the Royal City and killed many of its inhabitants. The rumor spread everywhere that the Hus was devouring the men of Greece.

The king was much alarmed and offered a reward for its capture, but the dreadful destruction went on. Finally his Majesty offered the hand of his only daughter and the half of his kingdom to the man who would slay the brute. But in spite of all endeavors to win so great a prize, the pig continued his terrible work, appearing now here,

The Black Hus

now there, and killing even the bravest men of the kingdom. Strange to say the monster seldom attacked women.

A year passed, and the Hus had grown to a more enormous size. Some said that he was as big as an elephant.

For a long time the nobleman and his family had to remain in hiding because of the fury of the multitude, who blamed him for raising the pig. The king seized his property, and the nobleman became a poor man and for some years he and his family were outcasts.

At last Egkartes determined to redeem his father's good name and, if possible, win the fair princess.

His father and mother were pleased with his boldness and readily consented to his undertaking. At once great preparations were made, and five men were persuaded to accompany the young adventurer. With brave hearts they set forth, confident of victory.

On the third day, as they approached the city they met a woman crying as if her heart must break. She told them that on the night before, her husband had been killed by some monster. She described the spot, near her dwelling, where she

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had found her husband, Methuson, dying on the roadside. "I ran to him," she said, "and held his head in my arms. His clothes were torn almost off his back. When I spoke to him, he opened his eyes and muttered something about a black beast, and then fell back senseless."

The men accompanied the poor weeping woman to her miserable hut, and as they stepped within and beheld Methuson and sniffed the odor of the place, they knew that the Hus was the beast that had done the deed.

Egkartes stooped and listened over the unconscious man's heart for some sign of life. In a few moments he rose to his feet, and turning to the wife, exclaimed: "Your husband is not dead!"

Sure enough the unfortunate fellow sat up. His eyes were red and inflamed, his temper was likewise fiery, for he broke into loud curses. But in a little while he recovered his reason and thanked his deliverers. Methuson begged to be allowed to accompany the band of Hus-hunters, and they readily gave their consent.

Toward evening of the next day, as they neared the City, they heard more news of the monster, who had been doing terrible damage to the people of the suburbs. Late that evening seven weary

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men crawled into beds in a very humble lodging-house.

As Egkartes felt himself slipping into a comfortable sleep, he was startled by the cry of a woman. He ran out to the house across the street, whence came the cry, and entered without knocking.

He found a mother holding her baby high up, while the awful Hus kept snapping at the child. A dozen men were in the room, sleeping off a debauch. Egkartes sprang at the monster, who seemed to recognize him, but without showing any fear, turned and coolly walked out of the house. It wounded the pride of the young champion to see the enemy treat him so indifferently. He returned to his men feeling disheartened. He could see no way of killing the monster. What could he do?

After many weeks of failure, Egkartes wandered to the king's garden and sat down near the entrance, where he found many other Greek youths who, like himself, aspired to the hand of the princess. They all knew that it was her daily custom to walk in the garden at sunset, and they were waiting to see her.

When the princess appeared, the young men

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stood up and humbly saluted her—all but Egkartes, who remained sitting.

She approached the gate, and looking earnestly into all the faces of the young men, paused for a moment, and threw down a rose. Then there was a wild scramble among the rival youths for possession of the flower, only a poor remnant of which finally remained in the hands of the strongest.

Meanwhile the princess was wondering about the handsome boy who took no part in the struggle, and presently she summoned Egkartes to her side. The youth rose, scarcely believing his senses, and bowing very low, approached the object of his despairing affection.

“Who are you, sir?” the princess asked, “and why have you not taken part in the contest for the flower?”

“I am your most humble servant, Egkartes, and I beg your pardon if I have displeased you by not joining in that mad rush for the flower. I must save my strength for a more serious contest.”

“But,” replied the princess, “I judge by your conduct that you are unwilling to please me.”

For a moment the boy trembled on the brink of confessing his love, but just as the words were

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forming on his lips, the princess motioned him away. The boy was broken-hearted, for he was too blind to see that the princess had really singled him out because he had not entered into the contest, and had shown himself different from the common run of love-sick youths.

Scarcely had Egkartes turned away when the Hus came running toward the princess. She was almost paralyzed with fear.

But who could describe the panic that seized the foolish mob of young men who had fought so valiantly for the rose? At sight of the Hus, they fled in all directions. Egkartes alone remained to defend the princess. When he saw his foe, he shouted with joy and rushed at the monster with drawn sword.

The beast recognized his adversary, and, opening his great jaws, charged upon him. When the combatants met, the boy's sword entered the pig's mouth. As he withdrew his weapon, Egkartes fell, and the pig, leaping over him, disappeared. Regaining his feet, the youth gave pursuit, brandishing his bloody sword.

The princess saw the whole encounter, and as she ran to the palace, her thoughts were divided between the peril from which she had escaped and

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the wonderful valor of her young preserver. She was afraid to tell her father of what had happened, lest he should deprive her of her free hour, but all that night she lay awake dreaming of her hero and praying that she might meet him again.

Three days later the city rejoiced over the news that a conjuror had destroyed the Hus. The fellow was brought to the king to explain about it. He said he had destroyed the monster by means of a charm. When asked to produce the head of the pig, he said that as soon as the creature died he vanished into smoke. The man's story was so plausible that the king believed him, and ordered a great feast in his honor.

Poor Egkartes heard the news with sorrow, and the princess, shutting herself up in her inner room, mourned bitterly. She did not wish to marry the conjuror, for now she loved the brave Egkartes.

On the day of the feast the whole city was gay and the people ate and drank in excess. Even Egkartes's men joined in the merrymaking; but the young hero himself sulked in a dismal cellar.

It was fortunate for the boy that he had not joined with the masses in their dissipation, for the

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Hus, knowing that they could not resist, came into the city and bit thousands of the people.

When he heard the cry of the Hus in the streets, Egkartes emerged from the cellar, eager for another combat.

People were scurrying for safety. None but the boy was armed. Hither and thither ran the black brute biting as many as he could.

As Egkartes rushed at the beast, that knowing warrior recognized the young Greek again and charged him furiously, first springing at his throat.

The boy stood his ground, and thrusting his sword, as in their previous fight, into the Hus's mouth, drove so hard that the weapon sank deep into the stomach of the brute.

The Hus fell headlong, roaring loudly. Struggling to his feet, he stood for a few moments, swaying from side to side, while the blood flowed freely from his mouth. The boy, without knowing it, had struck the pig's only vulnerable spot, the mouth. After a moment the great Hus turned and fled, roaring like thunder. Though no one saw him die, it seemed evident that he was mortally wounded.

Of course Egkartes became the hero of the hour. He was carried by six strong men to the

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palace of the king, who was feasting in his hall, not knowing of the brave deed that the boy had done. So when he heard the people shouting at his gate, the king came to the palace steps and called to the multitude who had followed Egkartes:

"Why have you come here with all this noise?" demanded his Majesty. Have I not given you a holiday and the freedom of the city? Why cannot you caper in your own streets and lanes? Have I no rights as king? Go to your homes or I shall call my soldiers to drive you there. Begone, I say, begone!"

"May it please your Majesty," said one of the people, "we have brought the hero who has just slain the Black Hus!"

"But," protested the angry king, "have I not at this very moment the Black Hus hero at my table feasting with my nobles? By magic he slew the monster but yesterday!"

But the people shouted, "Away with the magicman—away with the imposter!"

The king was much perplexed, but wishing to learn the truth, he commanded silence while he listened to the story of Egkartes and his victorious encounter with the Hus. When he learned the

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truth then the king ordered the lying conjuror to be hanged, and immediately the poor imposter, protesting and struggling in vain, was dragged from the dining hall and hanged in the garden.

Two weeks after this Egkartes was taken to the palace, with a great flourish of trumpets, and was proclaimed the hero of the country. He knew that he had not killed the pig as they had told the king; but neither king nor people paid any attention to his explanations. All insisted that he had killed the monster and had a right to the great reward.

The princess of course was delighted, and said to Egkartes: "I do not care whether you have killed the monster or not. I shall have you and we shall live very happily together."

The boy yielded to her persuasion, and a week later they sat together at a royal banquet in honor of their coming marriage. The company was jubilant with praise and marrymaking. The king, the queen, the royal ladies and brave knights drank deep and long of the red wine of the hills.

The hero was happiest of all until he began to see knight after knight flushed and boisterous from much eating and drinking. Then his thoughts flitted back to the dinner at his father's

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home, and to the first appearance of the Hus. He could not shake off the feeling that the Hus would appear again, for the beast always appeared when men began to grow foolish through drink.

It was not long before the king noticed that the boy was not laughing and drinking with the rest.

"Art thou sick, Egkartes?" he asked.

"I am not sick, most noble Sire," replied the youth. "Be it known, O, King, that I have refrained from drinking tonight because I want to be ready for the Hus, which is sure to come wherever there is such overindulgence."

Before he could proceed further, the knights broke into furious curses. "Away with the imposter! Away with him! Ha! Ha!"

The king commanded silence as he stood up dizzy with wine. Red-faced and boiling with anger he looked at the youth and said:

"Fetch in the guards and take this fellow to the guard house, and presently we will have a hanging in the reception hall! Bah! Thou too hast thought to seize my daughter's hand by trickery! Well, thou shalt hang!"

The king sat down and the guards seized the boy by the back of the neck and dragged him away, amid the laughter and jeers of the company.

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The boisterous merriment continued until the princess stood up and motioned for silence. Then she said:

"Most noble father, I now speak in behalf of all the women of Greece. The men of Greece have for years treated women as slaves, creatures of their wills. You, my father, without my consent offered my hand to any who should prove victor over the Hus. You have already seen what has happened. An imposter came first and frightened me nearly to death! You did not care so long as you could keep your foolish word. Now comes a youth who thrice has repelled the Hus, and because he has the courage to tell you the truth, you order him hanged without mercy or any thought of me. Henceforth I shall do my own choosing when it comes to mating! If you hang Egkartes then you will find my dead body in the morning by the side of his! Why have you condemned him in whom is our only hope of safety? If the Hus should come tonight—?"

"What do you say, Miss Impudence? I'll see whether your prophecy will come true. Let every gate be barred! Fasten every door with a double lock! Let the royal guards stand in every hallway! And you, ungrateful maiden, dance before this

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company. By the gods! We'll see whether the Hus is greater than the king!"

The king sat down heavily, and the princess obediently arose to dance before a drunken assembly.

Scarcely had she stood upon the floor than in rushed the Hus. Neither walls, nor doors nor swords had been able to keep him out.

The queen was first to try to leave the room, but the Hus flung himself upon her and buried his teeth in her shoulder. The king attempted to draw his sword, but the beast sprang upon him before he could even touch the hilt, seized him round the middle and shook him till he seemed like to fall apart. The once brave knights lay where they were and called loudly for the guards.

Amid the confusion the princess ran to the guard room where her lover lay bound. When the terrified guards heard that the Hus was in the palace, they were only too glad to release their prisoner.

Egkartes was not surprised to hear of the return of the Hus. He gladly dashed to the banquetting hall. When he appeared before him the Hus dropped his latest victim and squealed with rage. Well did the beast remember his many wounds

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received at the hands of Egkartes. As if to take revenge, he bounded toward the boy, who aiming his sword again at the beast's mouth, drove the weapon home, running it well down the throat. With a roar of rage the Hus sprang back, dashed for the nearest window, jumped to the earth, and disappeared into the dark night, still roaring furiously.

In a moment the knights were on their feet. Now that there was no danger they were eager to defend the king and queen; but his Majesty, ordering the knights out of the palace, embraced the hero, exclaiming: "Thou shalt indeed be my son."

So the royal marriage was consummated and the princess became the wife of the noble Egkartes.

The first act of the prince was to banish all drink from the kingdom, for, as he told the people, the Hus could never be killed but would be helpless as long as they refused to befuddle their senses with wine. He received great honor and later ascended to the throne—and the kingdom prospered as long as it took heed to the words of Egkartes.

THE LEVIATHAN

ANY years ago, before New York was settled, a poor old crocodile left her native Egyptain shores and swam to the mouth of the Hudson River. Up the river bank she crawled, till she found a home. Here she laid ten eggs and hid them in the hot sand.

Soon ten wee long-jaws came out and crept about in the sun. Mother crocodile fed her offspring with small birds, that she caught by lying in the river with her mouth wide open. The birds, seeing only the upper part of the great jaws, were easily fooled into mistaking them for an old tree trunk. Sometimes as many as fifty of them flew down to rest and gossip on the crocodile's teeth and cold tongue. Suddenly, when the clatter was loudest, the huge jaws came together with a mighty snap, crushing every little warbler. Then the cunning old mother fed her children with sweet titbits.

In the course of five years one of the young

The Leviathan

brood had grown to a monstrous size, and his ugly temper made him the terror of all the others. One day, in a fit of anger, he bit his two sisters so badly that they died. Then the savage reptile disappeared and stayed away, none of the family knew where, for fifteen years.

At the end of that time, he returned to find his mother dying, with her seven good sons about her, weeping bitter tears. But not a sign of pity did the returned wanderer show for his dying mother and her sorrowing children.

He was now a monster more than a hundred feet in length, and it was no wonder that when the brothers—pygmies in comparison with him—saw him coming toward them they fled in terror to the river, leaving their helpless mother at the mercy of her wicked son. Toward evening the brothers crept to the bank to see what was going on and the furious giant, who was lying in wait for them caught five of the little fellows and killed them as if in mere love of slaughter. The two others saved their lives by hiding till dark, when they fled to a place of safety down the river.

Not content with killing his brothers, the fiendish destroyer turned upon his mother, telling her that he had come back to avenge the insults

The Leviathan

heaped upon him when he was a little fellow; then with a vicious snap he bit off her tail, and she died at sundown.

“What a terrible brother!” thought the two escaping crocodiles as they made their way farther from the scene of danger. But the truth of the whole matter was that the monstrous fellow was not really their brother at all! He was the great Leviathan from Asia. You see, after the old crocodile had laid her ten eggs in the hot sun to hatch, Mendacia, the mother of lies and injustice, exchanged a Leviathan egg for one of the crocodile eggs. So when the eggs were hatched, Mrs. Crocodile, without knowing it, had a stranger among her own children.

Mendacia was jealous of the new nation across the waters, and had secretly followed the old crocodile, hoping to destroy the young republic through her terrible Leviathan. This monster was related to all the Leviathans that did so much damage to the children of Israel in the days of Moses. These beasts had always been murderers and man-eaters and Mendacia was the evil spirit that prompted all the wicked deeds.

So here she was in the land of America with her cruel monster fully grown and ready to begin

The Leviathan

work. Fifteen years ago, when her pet had committed murder, she it was who carried him away to shield him from just punishment. She was with him when he killed his mother, and Mendacia and her slave Brutus applauded him for that crime of unspeakable shame. After committing this terrible deed, Leviathan lay down and slept for a month.

Meanwhile Brutus built a beautiful house on Leviathan's back, and Mendacia richly furnished it. When the sleeper awoke, slowly he opened his dull eyes and blinked. Then, more slowly, he opened his forty-foot mouth and shook his forty-foot tail. As yet he was unconscious of the house upon his back but when he rose to his short legs and shook himself, he realized that he was holding up something besides his own weight.

Finding that he could not shake off his strange burden, the beast made for the river and attempted to sink, but could not do that, for the house kept him afloat. He tried to roll over, to turn a somersault, but all in vain. At last, exhausted, he lay in the river as if dead.

It was then that Mendacia spake words of reproof to her beast. "Leviathan! You poor foolish fellow! Why do you make such a fuss over a thing



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that you cannot change? If you disturb my house any more I'll be compelled to drive a nail through your back into your heart. But if you obey me, all will be well and I'll be your best friend. I'll help you obtain your food, and I promise that one human being a day will be furnished for your evening meal. Come, will you agree to do as I say, or not?"

The Leviathan thought for a long time and ended in blinking his lazy consent.

Now, on the bank of the river lived a boy and a girl. The boy's name was Lex and the girl's was Veritas. Both were seventeen years old.

One hot July day Lex took his friend for a little row up the Hudson. They had not gone far before they spied a peculiar craft coming toward them. Lex ceased rowing and the two gazed with wonder at the strange sight. On came the wonderful house, like a floating palace upon a brown island.

It was the Leviathan, of course. As it approached them, a beautiful woman gracefully walked toward the snout of the Leviathan, followed by her slave, and both sat down on the humps that formed the monster's eyebrows. From these commanding positions they held curtains over the creature's eyes, lest he should become too

The Leviathan

restive, and frighten away his prey. The beast had not eaten a human morsel for many days and he was very hungry. Nearer and nearer came the boy and the girl to the threatened destruction. But Mendacia, whose eyes were fastened upon the boy, suddenly thought of a new way to vary her life of plotting and murder. How amusing it would be to drag the children aboard and play with them a little before taking their lives! It would be such fun to hear them crying and begging for the mercy that would never be granted. So she guided the Leviathan by gently tapping him with her heel till the children's boat touched his side, and then, quicker than can be told, she and Brutus dragged the surprised youngsters aboard.

When the monster knew what the woman was doing, and found that his anticipated dinner had been lifted upon his back, his barking sounded like thunder-claps and his great thrashing tail lashed the water into foam. But the woman told her captives that they were on an island and that the noises were made by machinery.

She ordered a sumptuous luncheon and while the children ate with great delight, she watched them. Finally she determined to serve Veritas to the hungry monster and keep Lex. Why not keep

The Leviathan

him and make a slave of him? With this in view she gave the boy a powerful drink which made him entirely subject to her will while he was under its influence. He entirely forgot poor Veritas.

When Veritas saw what influence the woman had gained over Lex she was much disturbed.

As soon as she found an opportunity to speak to her friend, the girl said: "Oh, Lex, do not go near that woman, who is as ugly as she can be!"

Yes, she was ugly to all who did not like her, but to Lex she seemed very beautiful, and he was angry with Veritas for making such a remark. But before he could reply they heard Mendacia talking to her beast. "Be quiet for a little while," she said, "your supper will soon be served." What did it all mean? The crashing of the great jaws and the roaring of the ravenous beast made a hideous din.

The children now knew that they were on the back of some sea monster, and the thought made both shudder; even Lex began to see the woman as she was, though the charm had not entirely lost its effect.

But he had not long to wait before learning her real character. As soon as she had convinced the monster that he would be fed, he quieted down, and Mendacia walked with dignity toward the children.

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Before she reached them, her slave appeared and delivered a message to his mistress.

"Most gracious queen," he said, bowing very low, "there is a man swimming at a little distance. What shall we do?"

Mendacia hesitated; but reflecting that the magic potion she had given Lex would make everything she did look right to him, she decided to secure the bather for the Leviathan's meal. She did not care for Veritas's opinion—in fact she was glad of an opportunity to frighten her.

So she directed the beast toward the bather. Being naked, the man modestly crouched as far beneath the water as possible, and in amazement he watched the craft gliding nearer and nearer.

When they were almost upon the poor fellow, Veritas screamed. The man turned to flee, but hesitated because he had no clothes, and only sank deeper in the dark waters, while Mendacia called to him with a gentle voice and an inviting motion of her arm.

It did not take long for something to happen. The hungry monster was overeager and snatched for his prey too soon. With a wild yell, the man sprang to his feet and plunged for the bank, the Leviathan following him rapidly:

The Leviathan

The children, speechless with fright, watched the frantic efforts of the man striving to escape his pursuer. With a sigh of relief they saw him, not more than a few feet beyond the beast's snout, reach the bank and stagger for safety. The monster climbed the bank after him with his burden swaying on his back like a captive balloon. But the man reached a small cave, into which he flung himself with all the strength that he had left.

All this happened so quickly that the children did not comprehend it; they leaned weakly against the side of the house, scarcely realizing that they were on the beast's back.

By this time Lex had fully recovered from the spell. Suddenly he turned upon Mendacia with a scathing rebuke, calling her an ugly hag and a terrible monster.

Mendacia was terribly enraged again, sharp lines of anger furrowed her face. Fearing for his companion, Lex caught her arm and they turned and fled into the house. The woman quickly followed, and with the help of the serving man thrust them into a dark room, with a warning that if they did not obey her their end was near.

Though much frightened, the prisoners barri-

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caded the door as best they could, and tried to plan a way of escape.

They thought of several schemes but dismissed them as not being likely to succeed. At last Lex whispered:

"Oh! Veritas, I know what I shall do!" and he drew out his pocket knife. "I'll dig through this floor to the beast's hide and scoop a few handfuls of leather from his hide, till he shakes the house off his back!"

At once the boy proceeded to put his words into action. It was not easy as it seemed, for the wood of the floor was hard and the knife not very sharp. But soon Lex found a small crack and set to work to whittle his way through. For hours he worked. His hands became so sore that he had to rest every few minutes and Veritas took turns at whittling till Lex refused to let her work any longer.

At last the boy succeeded in making a hole through which he could easily approach the back of the monster. It was then midnight, and all was ready for the last act; but now Lex was too tired to do more. Both he and Veritas were so weary that they fell into deep slumber.

Just before the sun rose, the slave sprang out

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of bed to begin preparations for breakfast. He crept into his mistress's room and found that she was asleep. Then he thought that he would take a look at the children. He took a candle, carefully unlocked the door of their prison, opened it a little way and peered in.

As he looked more closely he saw the knife still clutched in the boy's hand, and the hole that the knife had made. At once he knew what the young prisoners had been trying to do, and he began to lock the door, so as to keep them confined till he could give the alarm. But all at once, Lex awoke, and gazed into the other's eyes. In a moment the serving man burst into the room and sprang like a wild cat upon the boy, who scrambled to his feet and with his knife stabbed the man in the neck. At this Brutus let go his hold and fled screaming from the room.

Of course the struggle awoke Veritas and she slammed the door to and held herself against it, determined to prevent anyone from entering the room. The boy resumed his efforts to cut through the thick hide of the Leviathan.

Mendacia was awakened by her man staggering into her room, bleeding from a great gash in his neck. In a few words he told what had happened.

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Mendacia rushed to the prison-room and tried to enter but the door was held fast. She threw herself against it again and again.

The monster began to sway back and forth, and then to thrash the water as the boy dug deeper and deeper into his vitals. Finally the huge creature rose clear off the water, shaking himself violently and wrecking the house completely. Suddenly, maddened by the pain of his terrible wound, he made for the bank and from there scrambled toward the woods carrying what was left of his burden with him. Trees were broken down by his rush as he tore on in his mad dash for freedom. At last he struck an old oak tree and the fastenings of the house gave way, but still the monster ran on.

All that night a party of the neighbors had ridden with the distracted fathers of the children looking vainly for their dear ones. Toward morning they heard a terrible noise, and rode with haste to the spot from which it came, and there they found the children lying unconscious by an old deserted house.

They brought their lost ones home, all rejoicing. When the children told their story, the people of the village refused to believe them, for they

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had not seen the beast nor his mistress. It was not until the swimmer who had so narrowly escaped appeared and confirmed their report of the Leviathan, that the people credited the story.

The children continued their friendship, and in due time they were married and had children of their own, to whom in after years they often told the tale of the Leviathan.

THE BROWN FRIAR



LONG time ago, where Milwaukee now stands, on the shore of Lake Michigan, stood a great forest. The first settlers were afraid of it, for many strange animals were said to inhabit the place. Wolves howled dismally every evening at the setting of the sun. Some said that the woods were frequented by goblins.

One evening a peddler appeared in the little colony. He was given a good dinner and was much pleased when he was invited to stay all night at the home of Charles and Betty Townsend.

It was quite an event in the lives of the children to have a stranger present. They were all curiosity when the evening meal was over and begged him to tell them about himself.

"Very well," said the jolly merchant tramp, "I shall tell you a story that occurred in these very woods."

"Oh! Oh!" cried the children. The man blew his nose in a red handkerchief and continued his yarn.

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"Ten years ago I was making my way home in a canoe from Canada. I came by way of Sault Sainte Marie and then along the banks of this lake. I had been to the Canadian side with my goods, had sold much to the Indians and made money, and I was coming home with a bag of money in my light canoe, and a merry heart. One evening I took my gun and strolled a short way inland to shoot a few wild fowl for my supper. I soon succeeded in shooting a pair of partridge—for the woods abounded at that time with much game—and was about to return, when I met, face to face, a curious bird, which resembled a common crow, except that it was white and with a black topknot. I raised my gun to shoot so that I might have a better chance of looking at it, but it flew upon a neighboring branch, and—will you believe me?—it began to talk!

"'Son of a tramp!' it began, 'thou wasteful peddler, wouldst thou shoot an innocent bird to suit thy idle curiosity? Shame! shame!'

"The creature stretched its beak and laughed in my face, nodding its topknot in mock defiance.

"I stood motionless in sheer fright, but when the bird jeered at me again, I seized my gun, saying: 'Balaam's ass! I shall teach you respect for

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your superiors! Dare you, that perch every night upon the stump of a tree, address a decent son of Adam in terms of scorn? I shall fill you with shot, pluck your feathers out, tear your tongue from your head, and throw you to the wolverines.'

"I raised my gun to fire, when the monster bird spoke again.

" 'Shoot, if thou darest, fool! I have beaten thee in thine argument. Because thou art big as a moose, strong as Goliath, thou thinkest to put an end to my arguments by destroying my mortal body! Thou art no man; thou art a coward, as all argumentative humans are! Go home and learn thy A-B-C's! Teach thy grandmother! Tell her that a pee-wee crow has beaten thee in a debate!'

" 'Well, of all things!' thought I, lowering my gun, and eyeing the impudent thing. 'Who are you?' I asked. 'Speak! If not, I shall scatter your brains to the four winds.'

"But the bird merely grinned, turning his head from side to side, tauntingly.

" 'Bang!' I fired, and the report was terrific. For a while I could not see anything on account of the smoke, but, when the smoke had cleared away, I saw beneath the place where the insolent bird had been, a monk. He was holding the bleeding bird

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in his arms. Where had he come from? I began to have cold chills down my back, and worse, remorse crept into my soul. I turned to flee, but my boots stuck fast to the earth.

"The monk spoke bluntly, but also very tenderly. 'Sir,' he said, 'thou has wronged thyself! Thinkest thou this poor bird, whose only fault was to be in thy angry, inhuman path, has died for naught? No, my son. Thou hast shot the King of Crows, and every drop of his blood, and every feather also, must be sacredly gathered by thee and brought to me before twelve hours have passed away.'

"He held to my view the bleeding bird.

"'But,' protested I, 'how can I gather blood that has already disappeared into the soil? Can his feathers be gathered—from where? I do not know.'

"The monk shook his head sadly. 'Son, it must be done—it must be done!'

"In a moment he was gone. I turned to run away, but I could not move my feet. 'Then thought I, 'it is indeed true.'

"That night the shadows themselves became moving crows, and every noise appeared to be the voice of the dead bird. I shook with fear. The

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woods grew black as ink. The fireflies floated about, and all nature laughed at me.

"Suddenly I heard the deep baying of wolves. I seized my gun and stood up. Nearer and nearer they came.

" 'Oh! I exclaimed, 'am I to perish by their teeth!'

"Soon I could see the gleam of yellow-red eyes glaring at me in the darkness. I aimed at the first one that came near me, and fired. There was a wild cry, and then the cracking of bones, for the others at once fell to devouring the wolf I had shot. Breathlessly I reloaded my double-barreled gun. In less time than I can tell it, the dead wolf was gone! Then there was a rush for me. I fired again, with the same result. Half an hour passed, and my ammunition gave out. Seizing the muzzle of my gun, I determined to fight to the end. When the wolves leaped at me, I sprang back: my feet were free. With the butt end of the gun, I beat them off, running backward all the time. Suddenly my back struck against a tree, and in a moment I sprang for it. A wolf seized me by the leg. My trousers ripped, but I scrambled up the tree!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Charlie, "what about the monk and the crow?"

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"I knew," answered the peddler, "that someone would ask that question. Well, to be brief, I sat on a limb all night—on the very limb on which the crow had been sitting. The wolves all the while were prowling about, and sniffing in the air, to make sure I was there. Not a bit of sleep did I get that night, and when the morning came, I was thankful, for one by one the wolves slunk off and I was left alone. When all was still again and things looked safe, my thoughts turned to the monk's threat, so I got down off my perch, and crept upon my knees, searching for traces of the blood and feathers of the crow. I succeeded in obtaining five little feathers, and these I pocketed with great care. I gathered up twigs that had any stains of blood upon them, and stored them away also. Then I made search under the leaves and dirt for signs of spilt blood. The leaves I gathered up, and the ground I sifted for particles of the precious fluid.

"While I was thus engaged, I heard a voice and looked up. It was the voice of the monk, saying, 'Hast thou accomplished all thy task?'

"I trembled and made no reply.

"Thou hast tried, I see, but hast not succeeded in gathering all. But give me what thou hast!' he said.

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"I heaped upon the ground all that I had gathered, just as if it had been precious gold.

" 'There are still five drops of blood and one feather missing,' said the monk slowly, and a tear ran down his cheek.

" 'Oh, monk,' I cried, 'help me; I shall find them for you!'

" 'No, no, my son; I shall give some of my own.'

"To my great astonishment, he cut his arm and let five tiny little drops of blood trickle down upon the pile of earth. Then he lifted his hand to his head, as if to extract a hair. Recognizing what he was about to do, I pulled a bunch of hair out of my own head, and threw it down. The monk smiled. Putting his hand beneath his cape, he drew out the white crow. He placed the crow upon the pile and clapped his hands. In a second, the crow—yes, the same old crow—hopped up and sat on the monk's shoulder. Children, I was so pleased to see that crow, that I cried and begged to be allowed to go with the monk, but he waved me off and walked away."

"Oh, peddler," exclaimed Betty. "Did that really happen in these woods?"

The peddler nodded. "Yes, children, it really

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happened, and the experience changed my whole life. It is very strange, but whenever I tell this story, someone soon afterward learns for himself that it was true."

The children opened their eyes in astonishment. But their father laughed at them, and mamma said it was time to go to bed. Very reluctantly did the youngsters rise and scamper off to rest. The peddler also went to bed.

When the peddler had gone, Charles and Betty thought a great deal about what he had told them. It was Charles who suggested: "Betty, let us go and search for the monk?"

"Oh, Oh!" exclaimed Betty, opening wide her large blue eyes. "Do you really mean it? But suppose the monk should see us?"

"Well, and if he did? We have not shot his birds."

So Betty stared open-eyed while Charlie outlined his plans. They were to steal away that afternoon, taking with them their favorite dog, Don.

As soon as dinner was over, Charlie and Betty, attended by Don, struck off into the woods with light hearts. They took the old, familiar path, over which they had many a time before played hide

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and seek. However, it soon vanished into a new and unknown winding trail. They were delighted to find a road so easily traveled in the heart of the wood. Though they did not know it, the path was really a deer's runway. For at least two long hours the children wandered, whither they did not know. At times they would stand and shout, just to see the squirrels scramble and talk back at them, and even Don would stretch out his neck and howl in unison. Occasionally a wild bird scurried away. Don always gave pursuit.

Suddenly Don cocked up his short ears and whined. The children looked and saw a few yards away a little vine-covered hut.

"This is the monk's home, I believe!" whispered Charlie.

"Oh!" exclaimed Betty, clapping her hands; "isn't it fun?"

Don, seeing Betty clap her hands, and beholding Charlie's face so eagerly looking in the direction of the hut, thought something strange was going on, and he lifted up his great head and barked. The woods rang with his voice, and Charlie silenced him. They could hear the clatter of geese and the quack-quack of ducks, but not a sign of a human being could be seen.

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"Let us go closer," whispered Charlie, growing bolder. Betty nodded, and slowly they crept, holding onto Don's collar, until they entered a most beautiful yard. In the center was a large pond, filled with wild geese, ducks, and all sorts of fowl. Nothing seemed to be afraid. The house was one mass of trellis work, ivy green. The door was open and the children, growing still bolder, entered. They found a table spread with flowers and fruits and other things to eat. Don, without waiting for ceremony, sniffed at a piece of bacon, and promptly devoured it. He looked around at the children, licking his chops and grinning. They were also tempted to partake, but the stillness made them afraid.

While they were looking at the pretty things within, they heard a step at the door. They turned and saw walking toward them a great turkey gobbler, almost as big as a man.

"Gobble-gobble," said the turkey. Don bristled up his hairs and growled.

"Gobble-gobble," again began the turkey. Charlie, summoning courage, spoke up:

"Well, Mr. Turkey, we are not doing any harm, and we will go away, if you make room for us."

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But the turkey only drew closer. "Gobble-gobble!—"

"Mr. Turkey," began Betty, feeling afraid, for he looked as if he were going to peck them, "we have come to see the monk."

The turkey shook his head from side to side, and again said, "Gobble-gobble." There was no doubt about his intentions. He meant harm. His face was scarlet and there lurked an angry fire in his eyes. He filled the entrance completely. The gobbler's face swelled bigger and became redder. His long string nose shot out stiff and straight. He cleared his throat and yelled, "Gobble! Gobble! Gobble! OOOO!" It was the turkey's challenge to fight.

Charlie rushed forward to protect Betty, but the creature caught him with his great foot and hurled him back. Don sprang to the rescue, but almost at once fell back with a great howl and began to wipe his eyes with his paw. The children were grief-stricken when they saw that Don had lost an eye. They looked at the turkey and saw him in the act of swallowing it. He seemed well pleased, for he grinned and licked the sides of his mouth with his red tongue. Charlie rushed the second time at the gobbler and succeeded in catch-

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ing him by the neck. The bird gave a squawk and a desperate kick, then tumbled backward and lay as if dead. The boy fell exhausted on the hard floor.

Betty ran to the door for help and was delighted to see a kindly old monk approaching. He stepped over the monster turkey and entered the hut. For a long time he stood and looked from girl to boy as if trying to fathom the whole affair. Betty could not find courage to say a word.

"Well, well! my dear, this does look serious!" the monk said.

"Please, Mr. Monk, do not be angry, we have had a terrible time."

"Yes," spoke up Charlie, sitting up, "we did not mean to disturb your dwelling place. It was you we were seeking and the turkey attacked us."

"Oh!" exclaimed Betty, "are you the monk that met the peddler?"

The monk nodded and Betty clapped her hands in delight.

"But, dear monk," she asked, "why don't you chain that horrid gobbler?"

"My dear girl, he is quite harmless, if you are not afraid of him. If you and Charlie had paid no attention to him, this afternoon, he would have

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left you alone. The old fellow thinks that he has the right to guard the place when I am away. If you are indifferent to his gobbles he believes then that you must belong to the family. No doubt he was afraid that you were going to steal something from the table."

"Oh!" exclaimed Charlie, "Don did take a piece of meat, but we could not prevent him."

"Yes, my dears, and poor Don has suffered for it."

Suddenly the whole trouble became clear. They had been guilty of stealing as well as Don. They had desired to take something and had only been prevented by the appearance of the turkey. Now as they watched him strutting about the yard—for he had scrambled to his feet while they were talking—he did not look so fierce. And strange to say, they understood the meaning of "Gobble." It was nothing more than, "Vanity and ignorance, tut and nonsense."

"Come with me," said the good old monk, and he led the children to the top of the very high hill. Here he showed them all the great cities of the East through a large telescope.

It was a very powerful glass for it could bring into view any place that the looker desired. They

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saw their own home. They saw New York and all the great cities.

"Why are the people trampling on each other?" inquired Betty.

"Gold, the love of gold. Yet it is not making them any happier. You can see that. Now take a look at that woman, Betty."

Betty looked and saw a simply dressed woman attending to her children. Her face beamed with pleasure. They looked at another woman, driving in a carriage, all pampered and bedecked. She had pain written on her face. She was loaded down with jewels so that her fingers ached, and her general appearance was distressful.

"Are all rich people unhappy?" asked Charlie.

"No. Look at the woman I shall show you now. She is richer than the first one you saw."

They looked and saw a gentle-eyed woman busy carrying cheer into the poorer haunts of men. She was a very beautiful as well as a happy woman.

"Life is not what we have, children, but what we are. Rich or poor, we can be happy if we do something for one another."

"Tell us how to be happy without money," said the boy.

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The monk smiled. "There is but one way."

"What is it?" They eagerly asked.

"Do the thing that is right whenever required, and do it immediately. For instance, restore the lost eye to Don."

"But!" they both protested, "how can we—for the gobbler swallowed it?"

The monk lowered his voice: "Why not give one of your eyes to him?"

"I will give my eye, dear Monk!" replied the boy.

Poor Don stood opposite them, a sorry sight.

"No! No! You will not!" cried Betty. "I will give mine."

"It must be done by both!" whispered the monk.

It was a dreadful minute.

"Are you ready?" inquired the monk. Charlie nodded his head and the good man took out a sharp knife and quickly extracted one eye. The pain was hard to bear, but the boy never cried. Then the monk did the same thing to Betty. Both covered their faces and wept.

Don nosed his way to Charlie and licked his hands. Charlie peered through his fingers and saw Don with two whole eyes.

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"Oh, Don!" he exclaimed, forgetting himself and hugging the old fellow, "I am so glad that you have two eyes again!"

"Oh, Charlie! Charlie!" exclaimed Betty, "you have not lost an eye! Have I two eyes?"

To their great amazement, the children found that they had not lost their eyes at all, but by the operation could see better than ever.

"Yes," explained the good monk, "do what is right when you see that it is to be done, and never think of the pain. Then you will always be happy."

Then he took the children by the hands and told them it was time to go home. They did not want to leave the kind Father, but he assured them that they could come again. Yes, they came often and brought others too.

"I'm glad we weren't afraid to give up our eyes for Don," said Betty, as they were getting ready for bed that night.

"So am I," said Charlie. "And I'm going to remember this whenever I feel like being selfish again: That one doesn't lose anything by trying to help another."





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